

OS-level Side Channels without Procfs: Exploring Cross-App Information Leakage on iOS

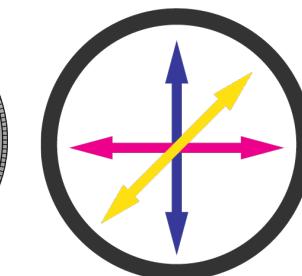
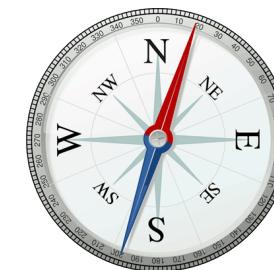
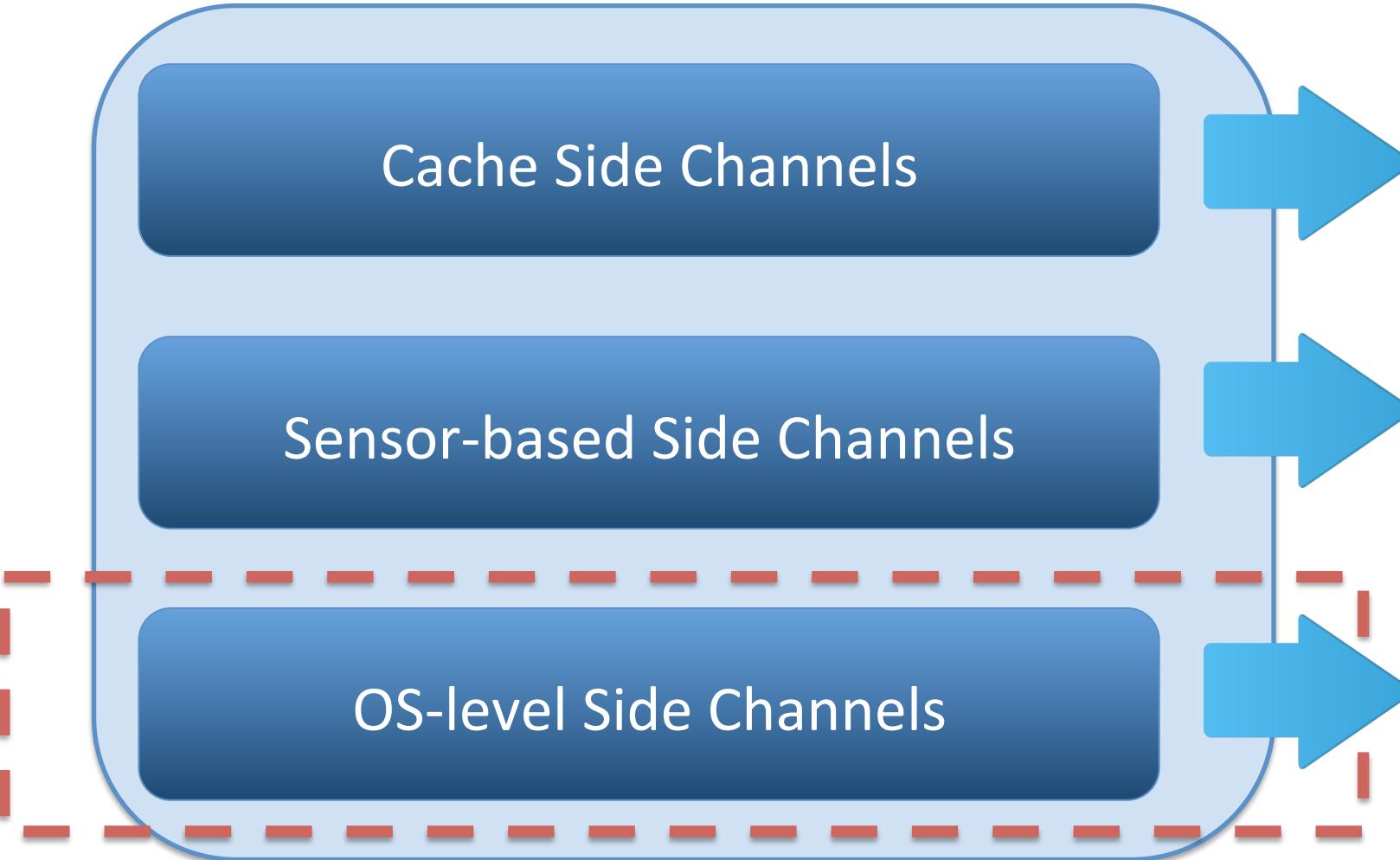
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Yinqian Zhang¹ and XiaoFeng Wang²

¹The Ohio State University, ²Indiana University Bloomington, ³Tsinghua University



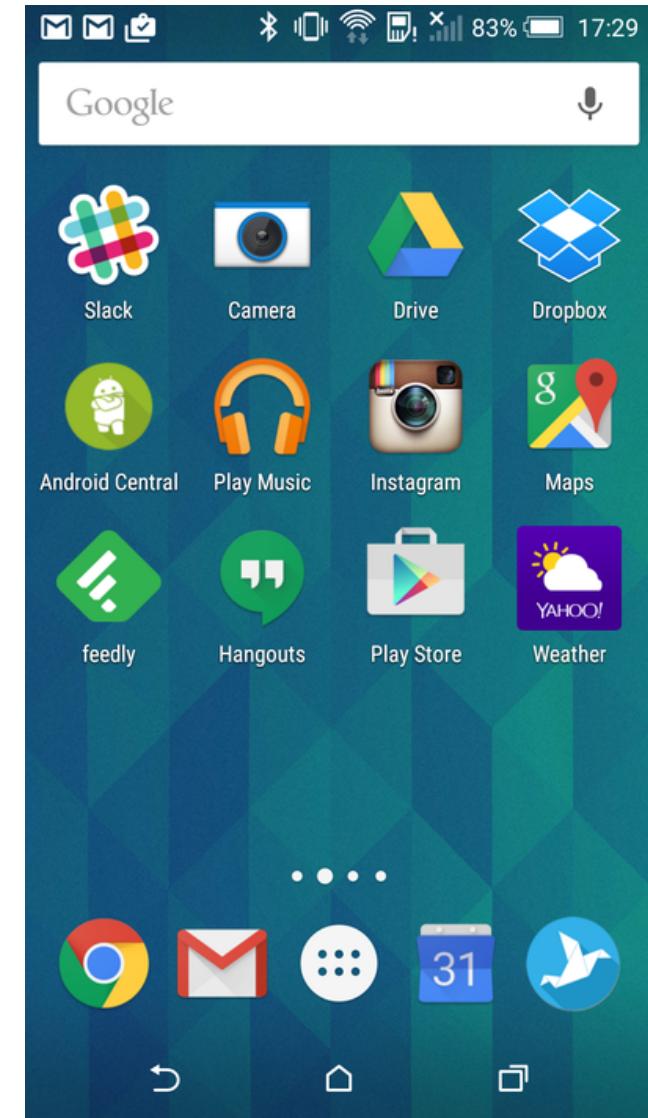
Mobile Side-Channel Attacks

- Side-channel Attack: make use of seemingly harmless information to infer sensitive information



OS-level Side-Channel Attacks on Android

- Malicious app running in the background, calling APIs
- Procfs: system statistics
 - virtual/physical memory, network traffic, CPU usage info, ...



```
zxk@zxk-VirtualBox:~$ ls /proc
1      1498  1776  1957  2055  2226  2421  4      526   65    769  96
10     15     18    1961  2061  2230  2476  401    53    66    77    97
1056   150   1870  1962  2064  2245  2499  47     54    67    78    acpi
11     154   1881  1966  2090  2246  25    471   55    68    8     asound
1102   1542  1886  1967  2099  2251  2524  475   555   69    82    buddyinfo
1134   155   19     1980  21    2255  2535  48     56    693   866   bus
1197   156   1911  1984  2129  2271  2544  49     561   7     870   cgroups
12     157   1912  2     2143  2277  2545  493   57    70    877   cmdline
1221   158   1913  20    2164  23    2558  5     58    71    878   consoles
1234   16     1916  2041  2176  2364  26    50    59    714   881   cpuinfo
1286   1655  1921  2045  2189  2373  28    503   6     72    9     crypto
13     169   1925  2046  2198  2387  29    507   60    726   938   devices
1308   17     1929  2047  22     2399  3     51    61    73    945   diskstats
1333   170   1931  2048  2202  24    30    517   62    74    95    dma
14     1704  1941  2051  2205  2404  31    52    63    75    951   driver
148    1774  1954  2054  2207  2411  397   525   64    76    956   execdomains
                                fb       filesystems    locks      stat
                                mdstat    meminfo      interrupts  misc
                                sysrq-trigger  iomem      modules
                                sysvipc      mounts    thread-self
                                mtrr      net        timer_list
                                pagetypeinfo  keys      partitions
                                sched_debug  key-users  schedstat
                                version      kmsq      version_signature
                                vmallocinfo  kpgecgroup  self
                                vmstat      kpgecount  slabinfo
                                zoneinfo    loadavg   softirqs
```

OS-level Side-Channel Attacks on iOS



- No Procfs providing system stat

```
zxk@zxk-VirtualBox:~$ ls /proc
1 1498 1776 1957 2055 2226 2421 4 526 65 769 96
10 15 18 1961 2061 2230 2476 401 52 66 77 97
1056 150 1870 1962 2064 2245 2499 47 53 67 78 acpi
11 154 1881 1966 2090 2246 25 471 53 8 asound
1102 1542 1886 1967 2099 2251 2524 475 555 82 bus
1134 155 19 1980 21 2255 2535 48 56 6 76
1197 156 1911 1984 2129 2271 2544 49 561 7
12 157 1912 2 2143 2277 2545 493 57 70
1221 158 1913 20 2164 23 2558 5 58 71
1234 16 1916 2041 2176 2364 26 50 59 71
1286 1655 1921 2045 2189 2373 28 503 6 9
13 169 1925 2046 2198 2387 29 507 60 70
1308 17 1929 2047 22 2399 3 51 52 73
1333 170 1931 2048 2202 24 30 517 62 74
14 1704 1941 2051 2205 2404 31 52 63 75
148 1774 1954 2054 2207 2411 397 525 64 76
fb   filesystems  locks  stat
filesys  mdstat  swaps
fs      meminfo  sys
interrupts  misc  sysrq-trigger
iomem  modules  sysvipc
ioports  mounts  thread-self
irq    net  timer_list
kallsyms  partitions  timer_stats
kcore  key-users  uptime
keys   sched_debug  version
kmssg  kpagegroup  version_signature
kpagecount  scsi  vmallocinfo
self   kpageflags  vmstat
kpageinfo  slabinfo  zoneinfo
loadavg  softirqs
```

- No unauthorized cross-app query



Is it possible to
conduct OS-level
side-channel
attacks on iOS?

Outline

1. Side-channel Attack Vectors on iOS
2. Attack 1: Classifying User Activities
3. Attack 2: Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities
4. Attack 3: Bypassing Sandbox Restrictions
5. Practical Issues
6. Countermeasures
7. Conclusion

Threat Model

- Monitoring app:
 - User downloads it from App Store
 - Audio player



New Attack Vectors

- `Host_statistics64()`: Global API

```
kern_return_t host_statistics64(host_t host_priv, host_flavor_t flavor, host_info64_t host_info64_out, mach_msg_type_number_t *host_info64_outCnt);
```
- `Getifaddrs()`:

```
int getifaddrs(struct ifaddrs **ifap);
```
- `[NSFileManager fileExistsAtPath:]`: The existence of a file/directory
 - `(BOOL)fileExistsAtPath:(NSString *)path;`

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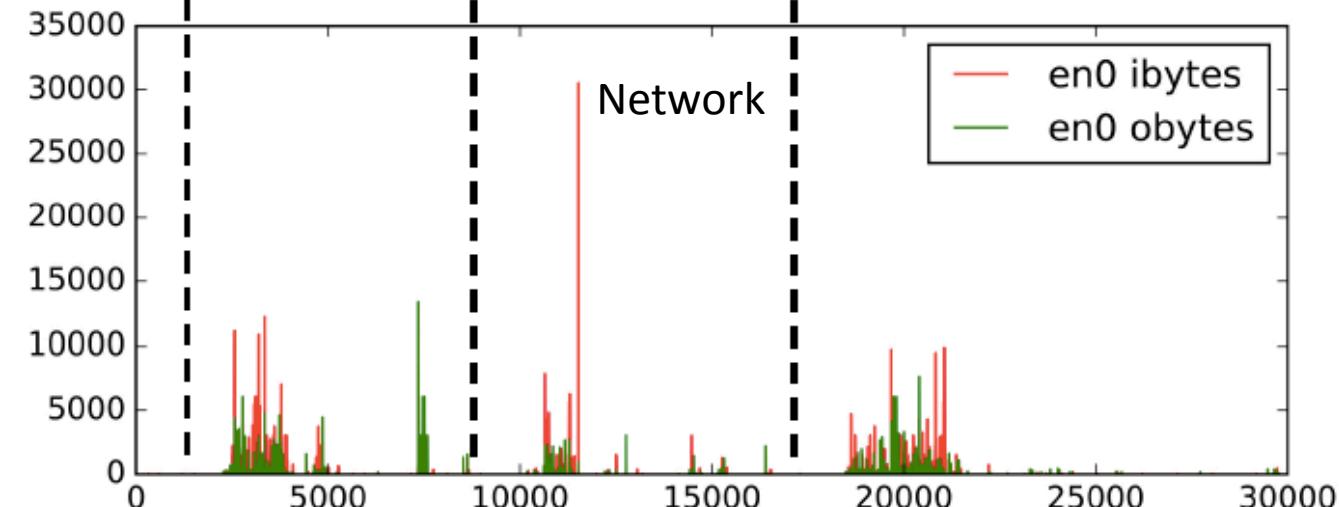
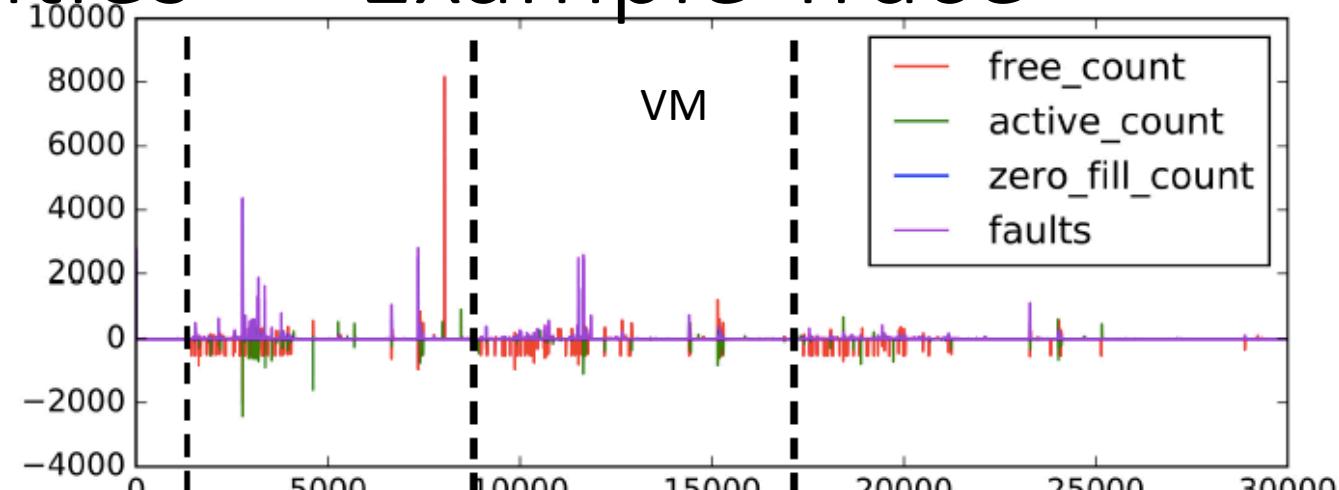
Classifying User Activities --- Example Trace



- Calling APIs to get time series A
 - Host_statistics64()
 - Getifaddrs()
- Plotting diff series: $A[i] - A[i-1]$

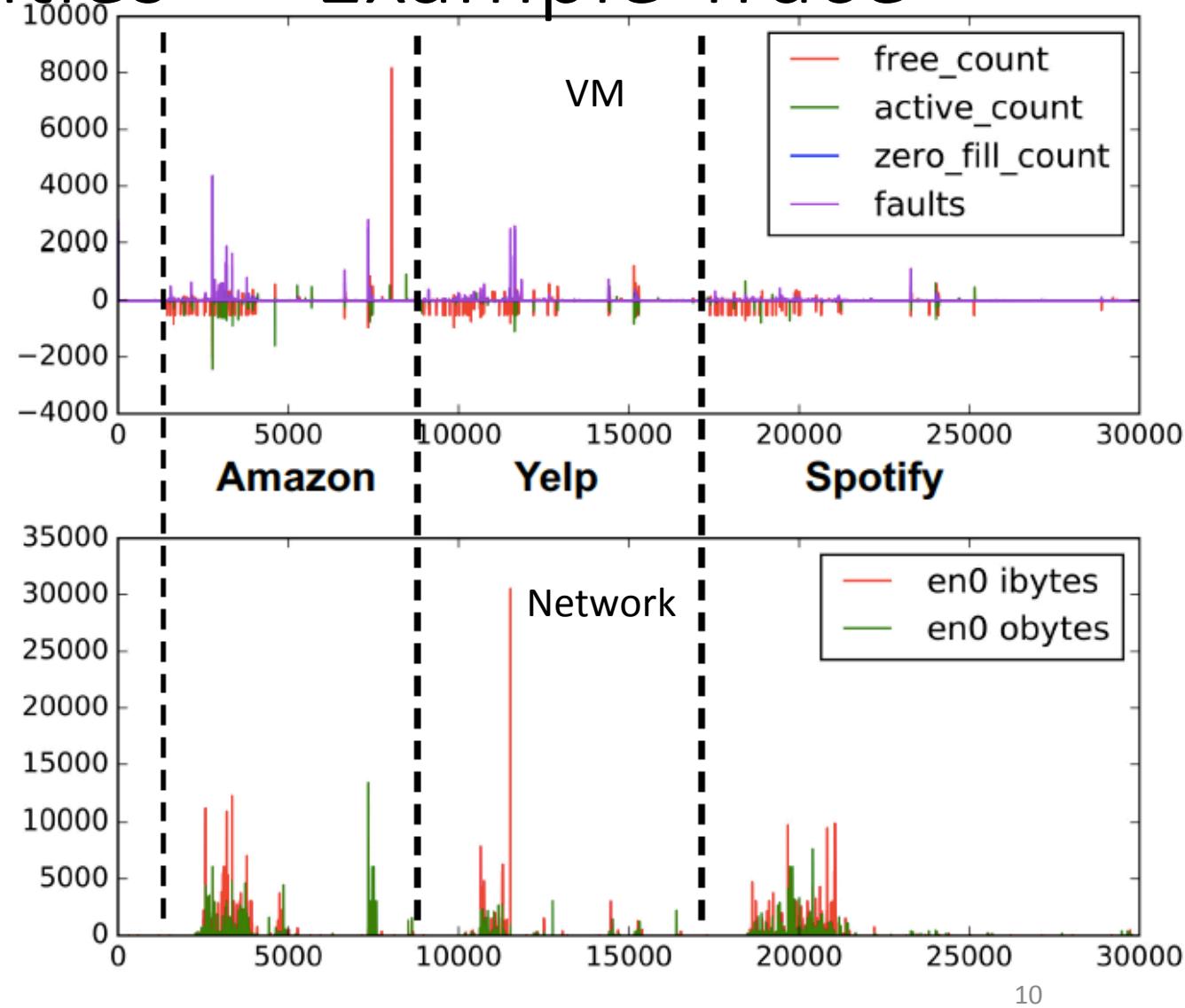


Time series leak
information!!!



Classifying User Activities --- Example Trace

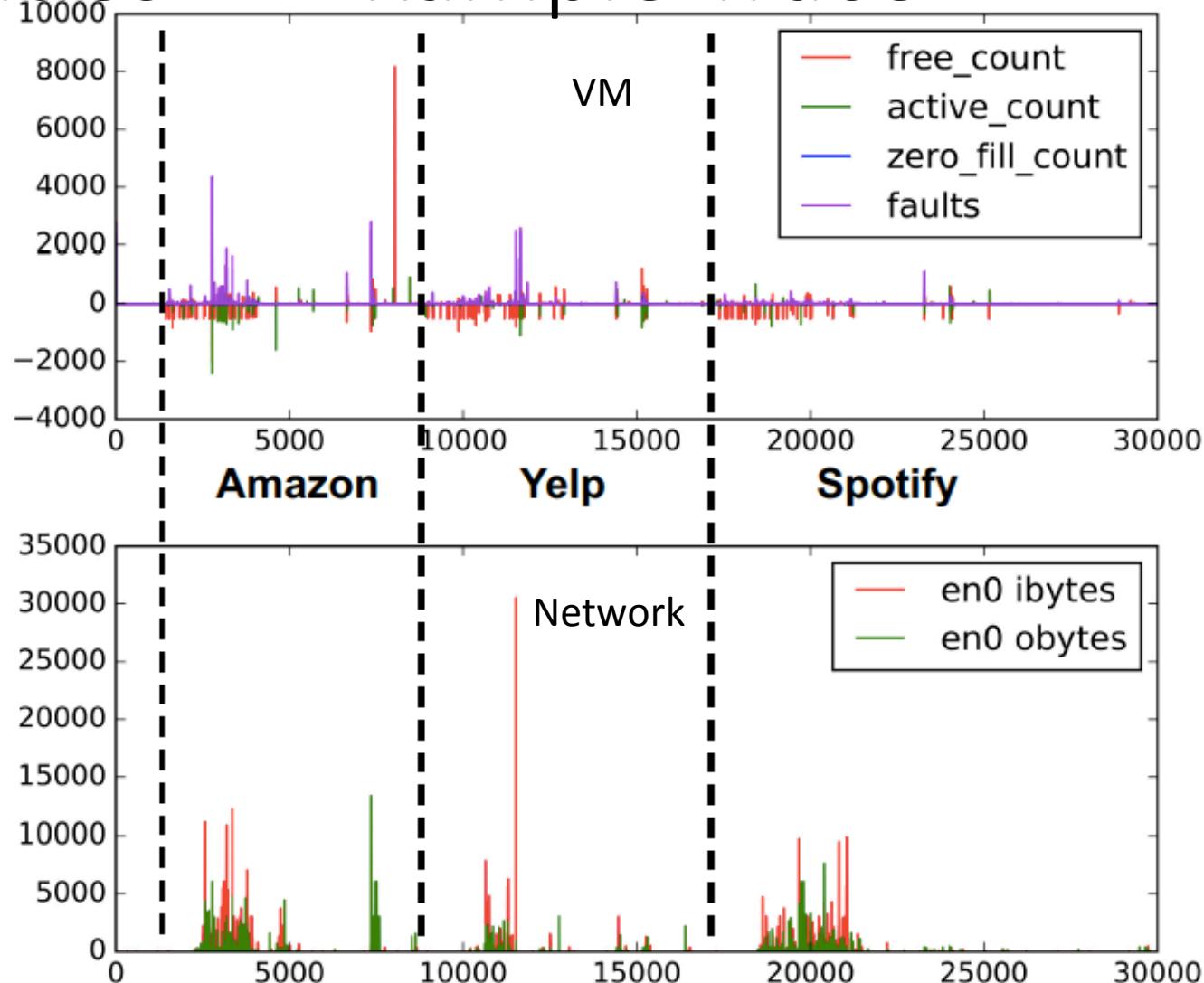
How to combine multiple time series to perform inference attacks?



Classifying User Activities --- Example Trace

How to combine multiple time series to perform inference attacks?

- Requirements:
 - Combining multiple time series
 - Reducing the dimension
- Major components:
 - SAX (Keogh et al., 2002)
 - BOP (Lin et al., 2009)
 - LibSVM (Chang et al., 2011)



Classifying User Activities --- Case Studies

- Device: jailbroken iPhone 7 with iOS 10.1.1



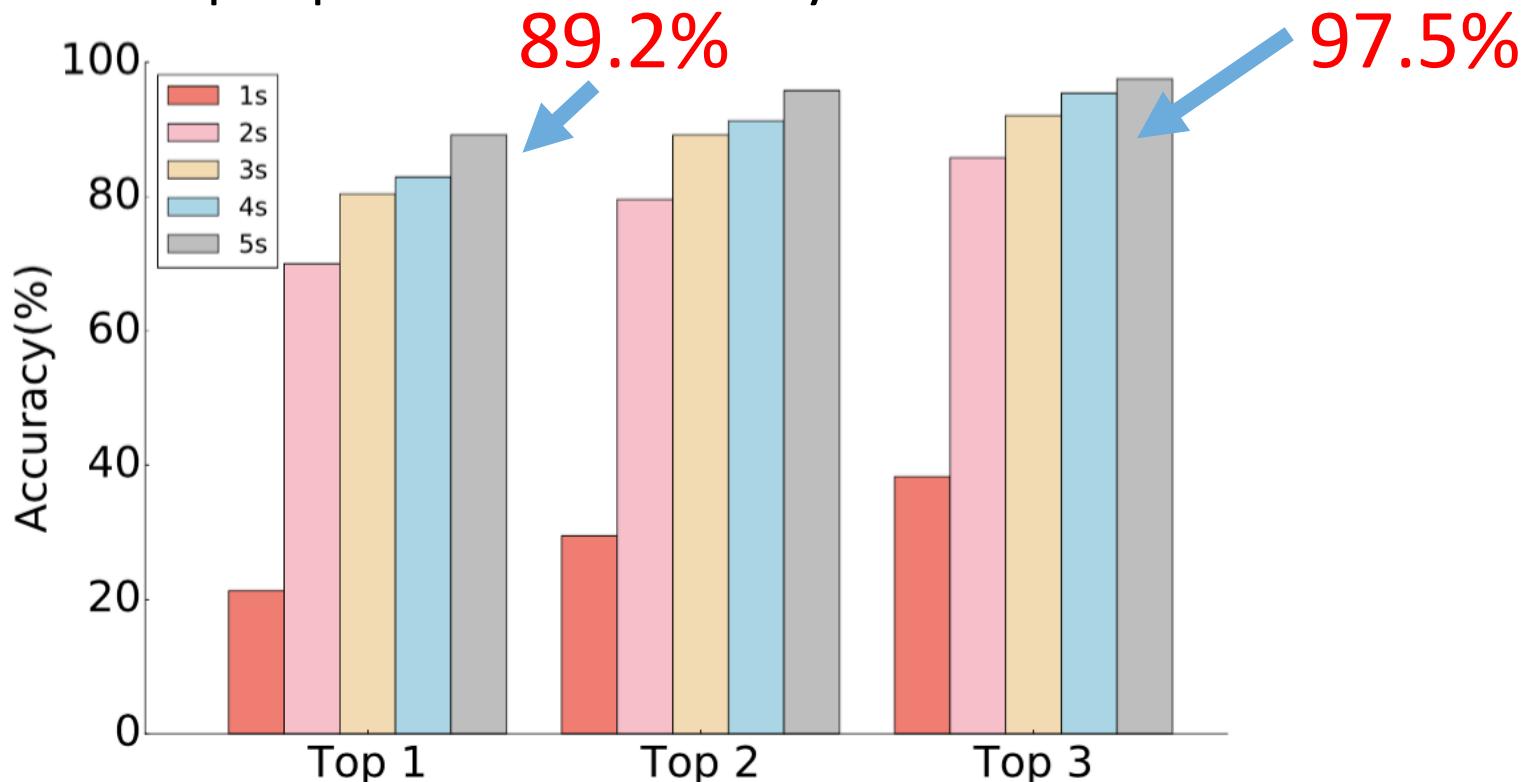
- Automated using Cycript

- Monitoring app:
 - running in the background
 - calling APIs at a rate of 1000/s



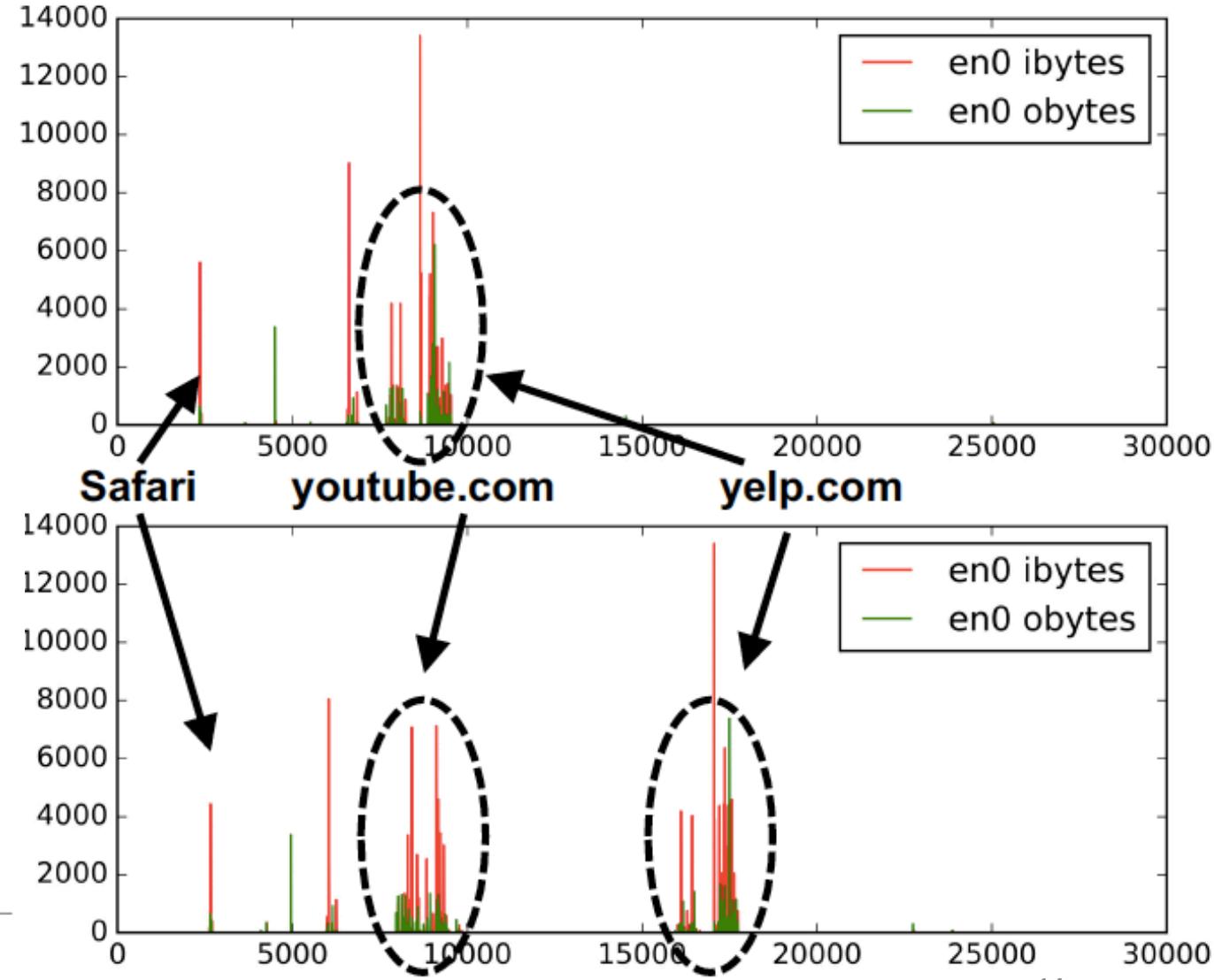
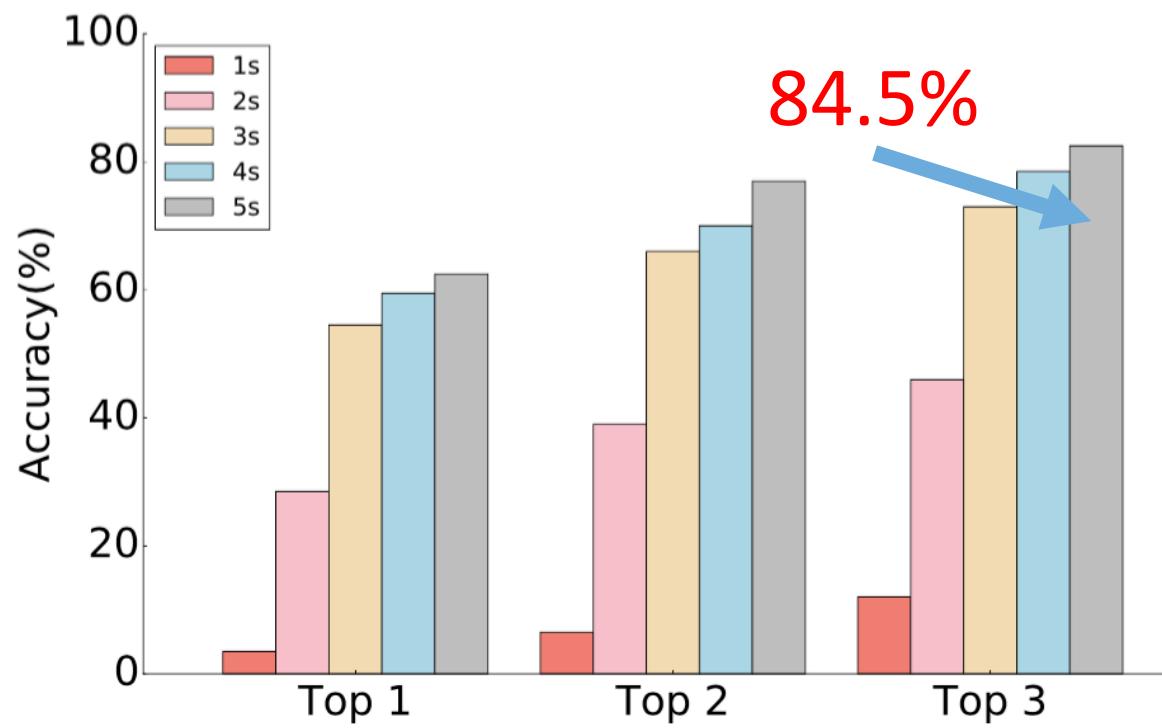
Classifying User Activities --- Case Studies

- Foreground Apps:
 - 100 apps from Top Charts + 20 pre-installed apps
 - Top N accuracy: the percentage of the test samples being correctly labeled by one of the top N predicted classes by the classifier



Classifying User Activities --- Case Studies

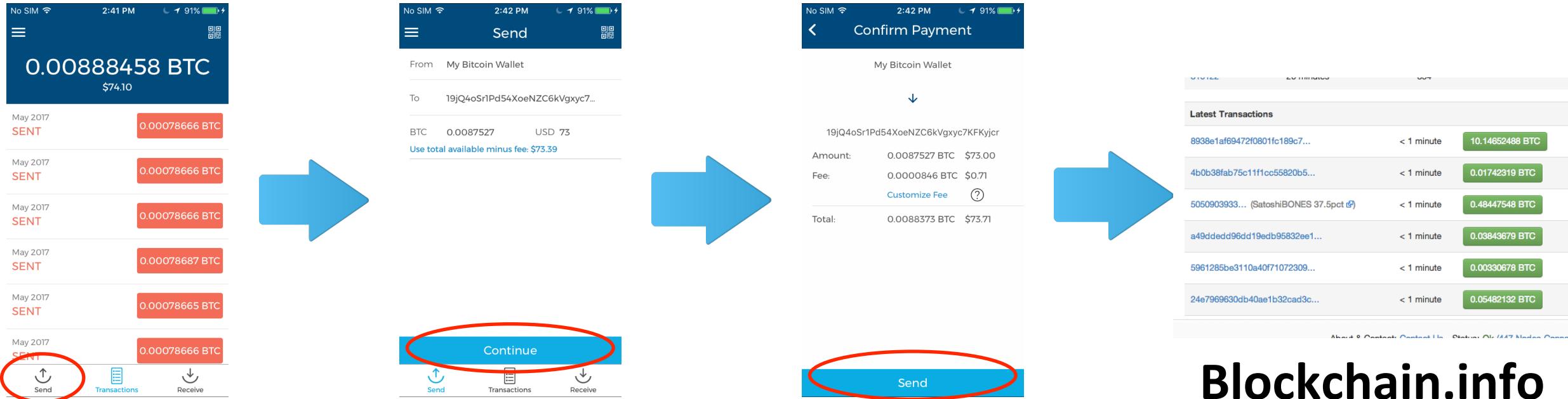
- Safari Websites



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Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities

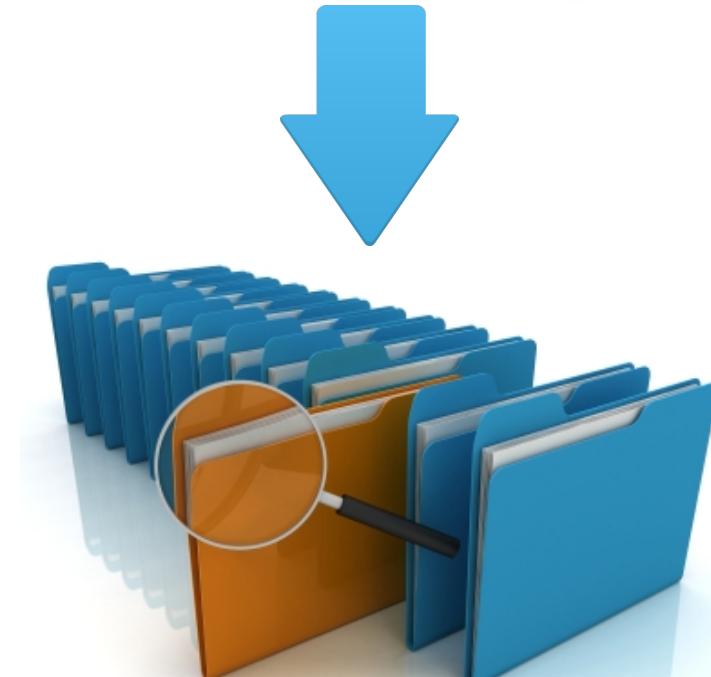


Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities --- Attack Methods

- Identify critical events



- Correlates with public records



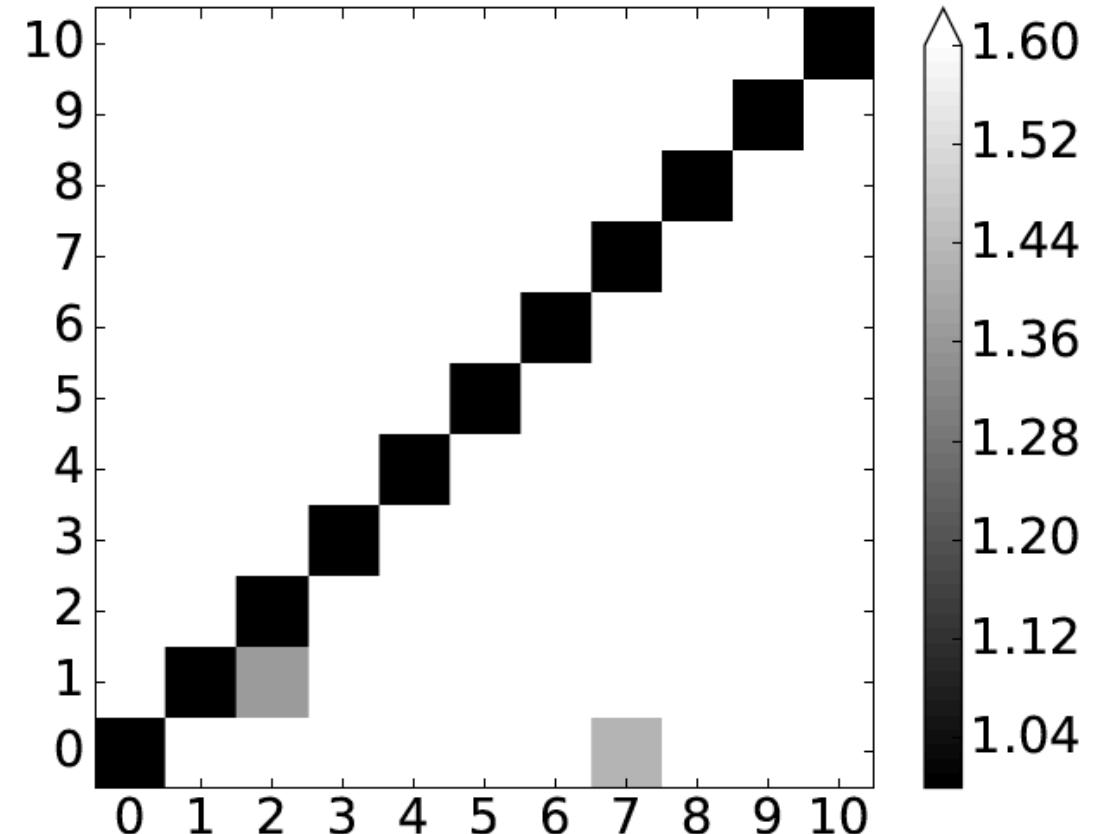
Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities --- Case Studies

- Target: *Blockchain Wallet App*



- Goal: identify *payment* event (idx: 0)

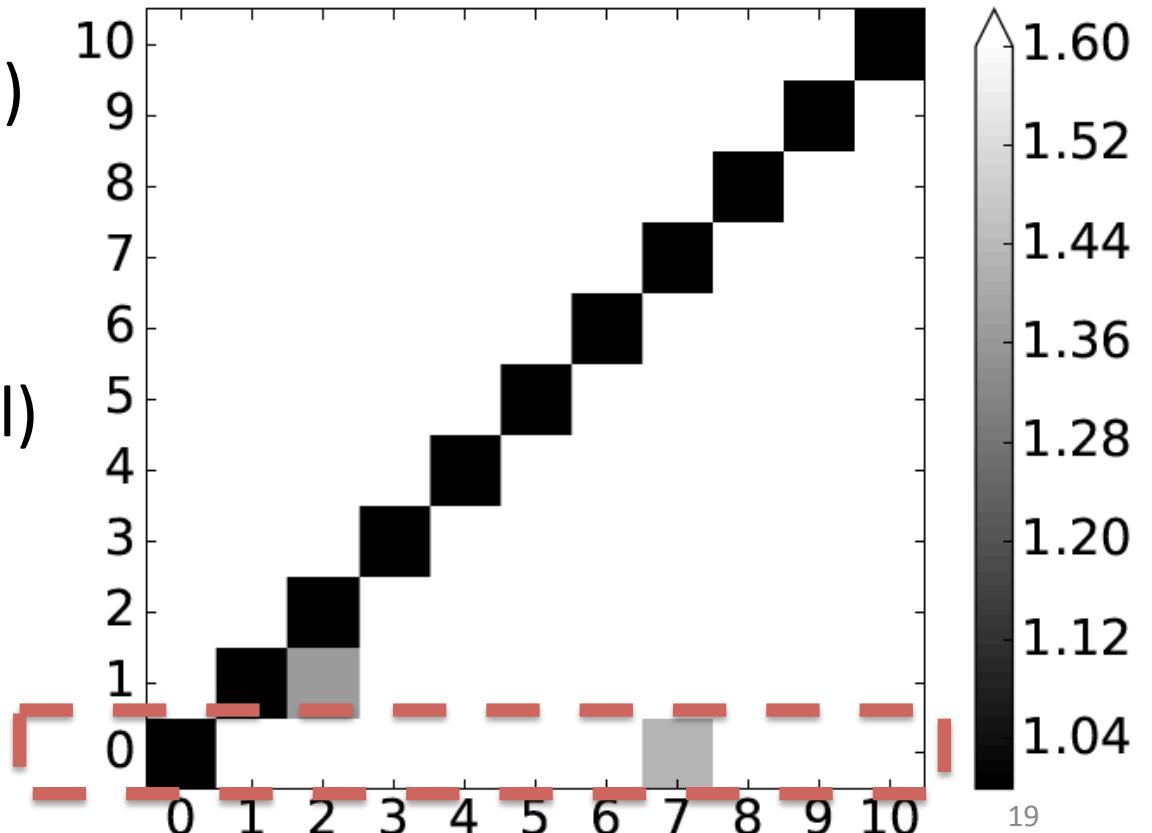
$$d(\vec{X}_t, \vec{S}_t) = \sum_{k=1}^l \frac{1}{w_k} \cdot \text{DTW}(\vec{X}_t^k, \vec{S}_t^k)$$



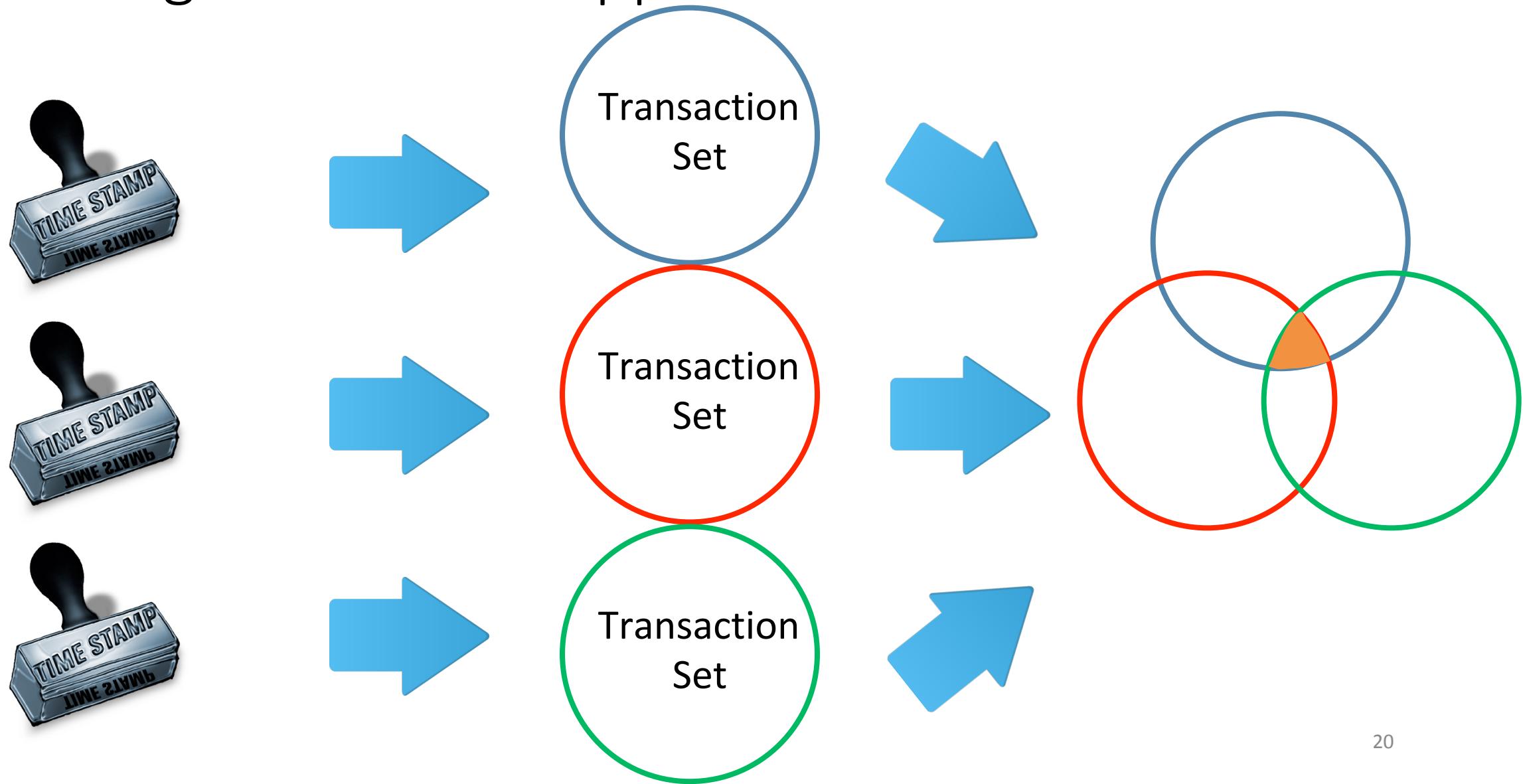
Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities --- Case Studies

- Target: *Blockchain Wallet App*
- Goal: identify *payment* event (idx: 0)
- Normalize the distance per row
using $\text{cell}(i,i)$ as the base (diagonal)

$$d(\vec{X}_t, \vec{S}_t) = \sum_{k=1}^l \frac{1}{w_k} \cdot \text{DTW}(\vec{X}_t^k, \vec{S}_t^k)$$



Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities --- Case Studies



Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities --- Case Studies

5ed3621674e7d248ee76fcfc598cb1ba22e415ea136b9d426329e55cc3a314a1b

182LvwJ8mXFzDabcGwoZU7suxnWYSx33h3



1EwBVFjMc1iTsw1J7KuKcyuhbWZ7fpqTAF
1FbrQqG4q3qovgfZu3zFmwyPrRgqETh8BS

0.0035 BTC

0.0029062 BTC

0.0064062 BTC

A sent 0.0035 BTC to B (1EwB...), The rest went to C (1Fbr...)

1820b428590ba963fa846cf201dbea20e2583d10d1fc70594a08e6305996bc03

1FbrQqG4q3qovgfZu3zFmwyPrRgqETh8BS



1ANEDqV6uvJzvB3HpyRVsii6WE3Z4cDRDH
1yNT81hszWi3TgpcrHuHsToefLYHZUWhD

0.0015102 BTC

0.001 BTC

0.0025102 BTC

C sent 0.001 BTC to E (1yNT...), The rest went to D (1ANE...)

2594f78fb6e5bcdada572198e3e535d158213c8f4833677b103498761d4a1e6e5

1ANEDqV6uvJzvB3HpyRVsii6WE3Z4cDRDH
1ME71HCl94XGkAAPVudJS2kJLs3xqaNu7n



1CeNZEGjpKCPfUaqwDHfDL35GvaB1mJSLu
16rUNnTVJ1wL4LJjbFjAspJpAvmztEV6CS

0.0028 BTC

0.003436 BTC

0.006236 BTC

D sent 0.0028 BTC to F (1CeN...), The rest went to G (16rU...)

Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities --- Case Studies

- Other Targets: *Venmo / Twitter*



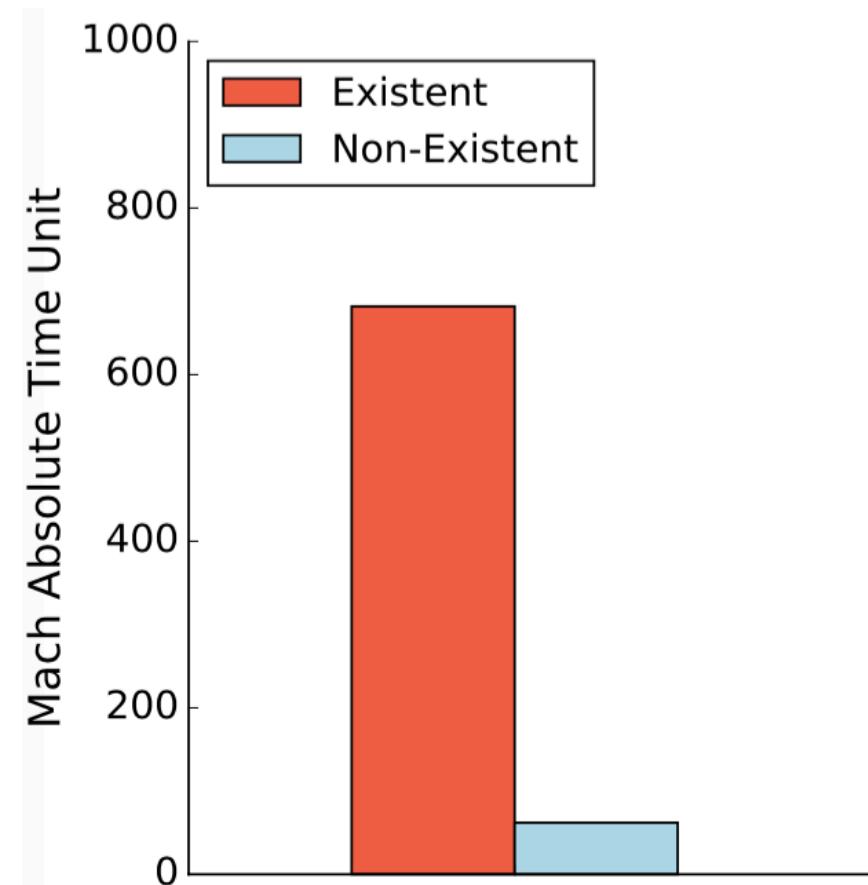
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Bypassing Sandbox Restrictions --- Attack Methods

- Device: non-jailbroken iPhone 7 with iOS 10.2.1
- Execution time of `FileExistAtPath`

Huge Difference!!!



Bypassing Sandbox Restrictions --- Case Studies

- Detect whether an app has been installed

DivorceForce



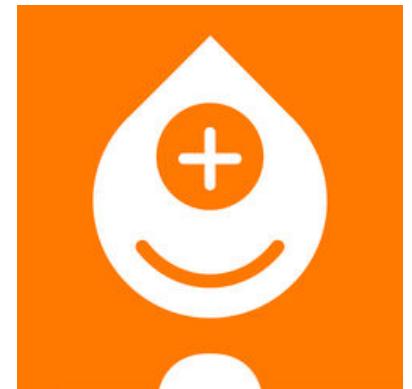
AsthmaMD



Pregnancy+

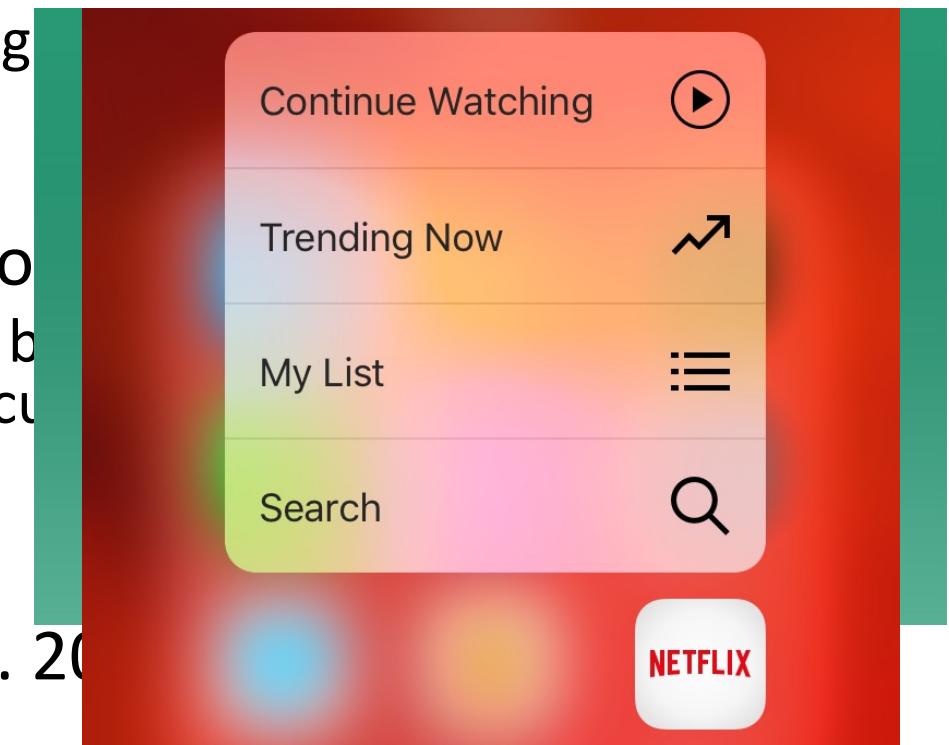


Sugar Sense



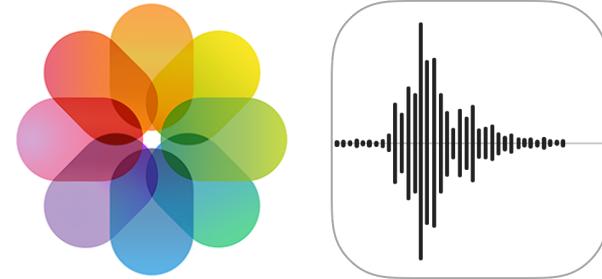
Bypassing Sandbox Restrictions --- Case Studies

- Push notifications:
 - .pushstore file with the bundle identifier as its name will be created in a specific directory
 - (/var/mobile/Library/SpringBoard/PushStore/com.g
Gmail app)
- Dynamically registered home screen quick actions
 - .plist file with the bundle identifier as its name will b
var/mobile/Library/SpringBoard/Application Shortcut
Gmail app)
- Top 150 apps in App Store's “Top Charts” (Aug. 2018)
 - Push notification: 67 (44.7%)
 - dynamically registered home screen quick actions: 44 (31.3%)



Bypassing Sandbox Restrictions --- Case Studies

- Other cases: number of photos/memos
- Generic approach to detect files



Outline

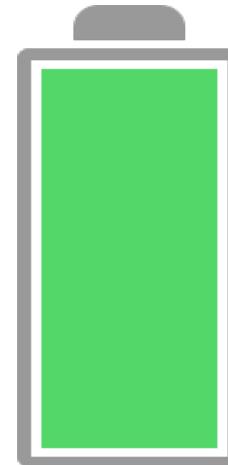
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Practical Issues

- App Store Vetting
 - Disguised as an *Audio Player*
 - Passed the vetting

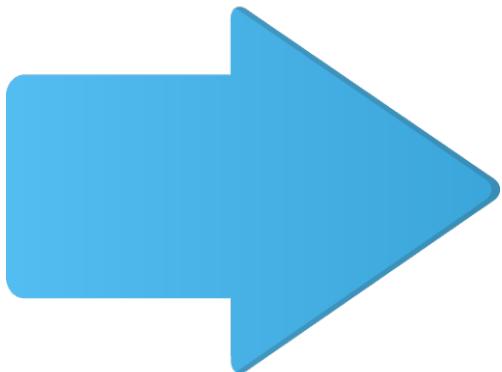


- Power Consumption
 - Device: jailbroken iPhone 7 with iOS 10.1.1
 - 60 min: 5% battery was consumed



Practical Issues --- Cross-device Attack Feasibility

training device: **Device A**
iOS **10.1.1**

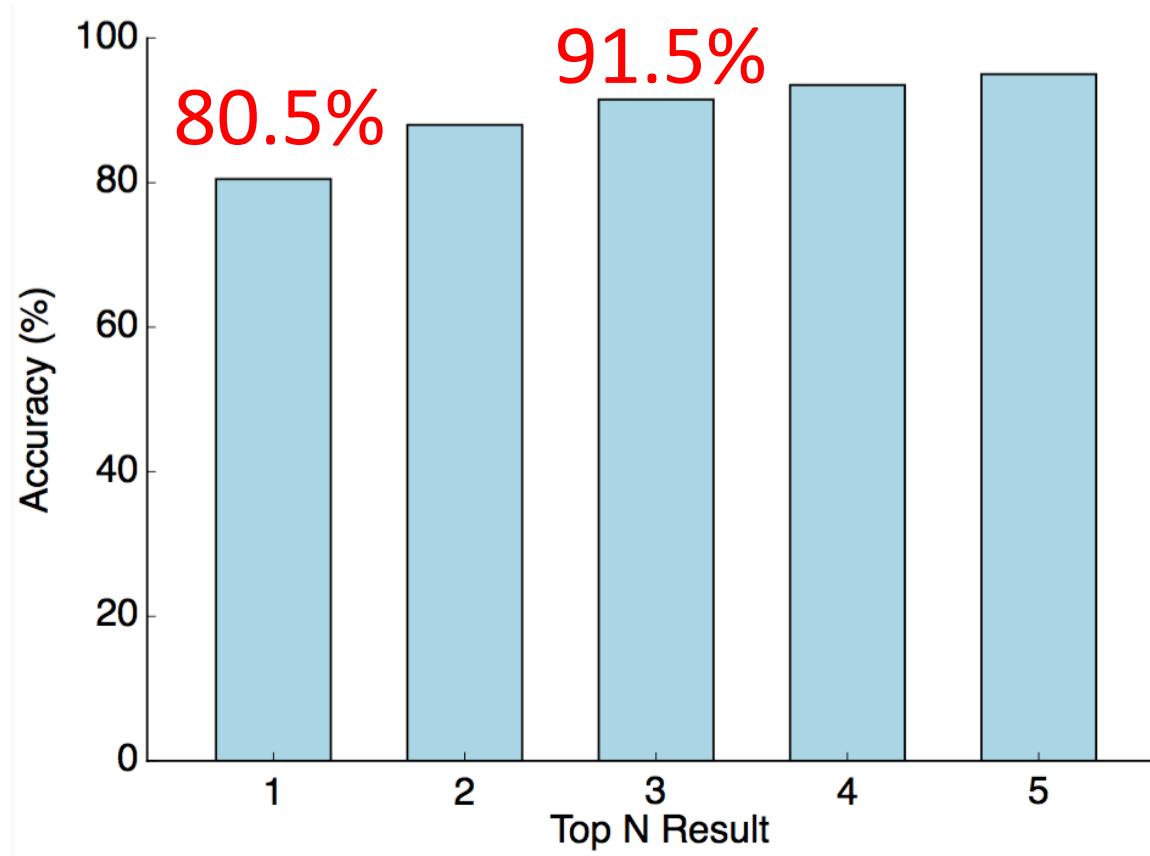


testing device: **Device B**
Non-jailbroken iOS **10.2.1**



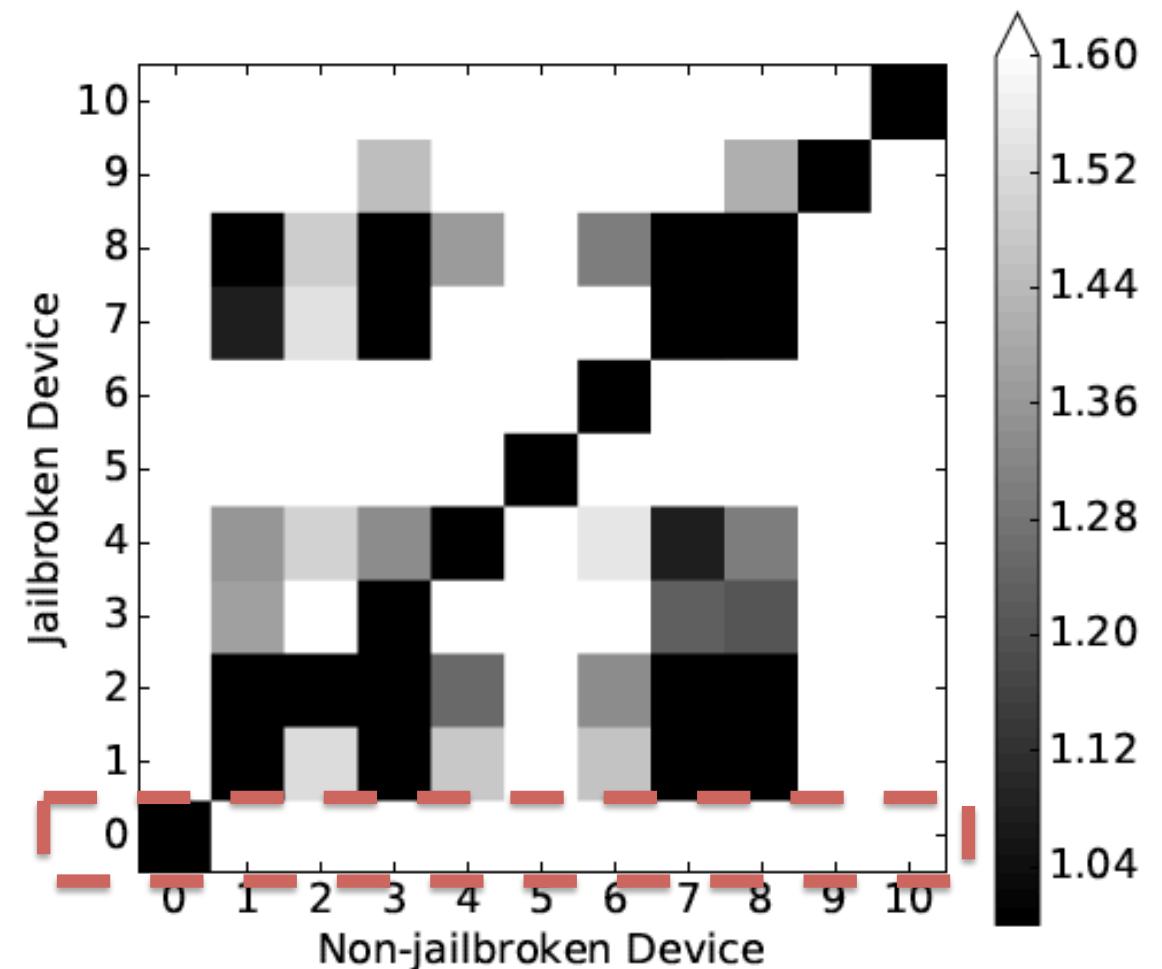
Practical Issues --- Cross-device Attack Feasibility

- Test set: Randomly select 20 third-party apps
- Redo Foreground Apps Experiment



Practical Issues --- Cross-device Attack Feasibility

- Target: *Blockchain Wallet*

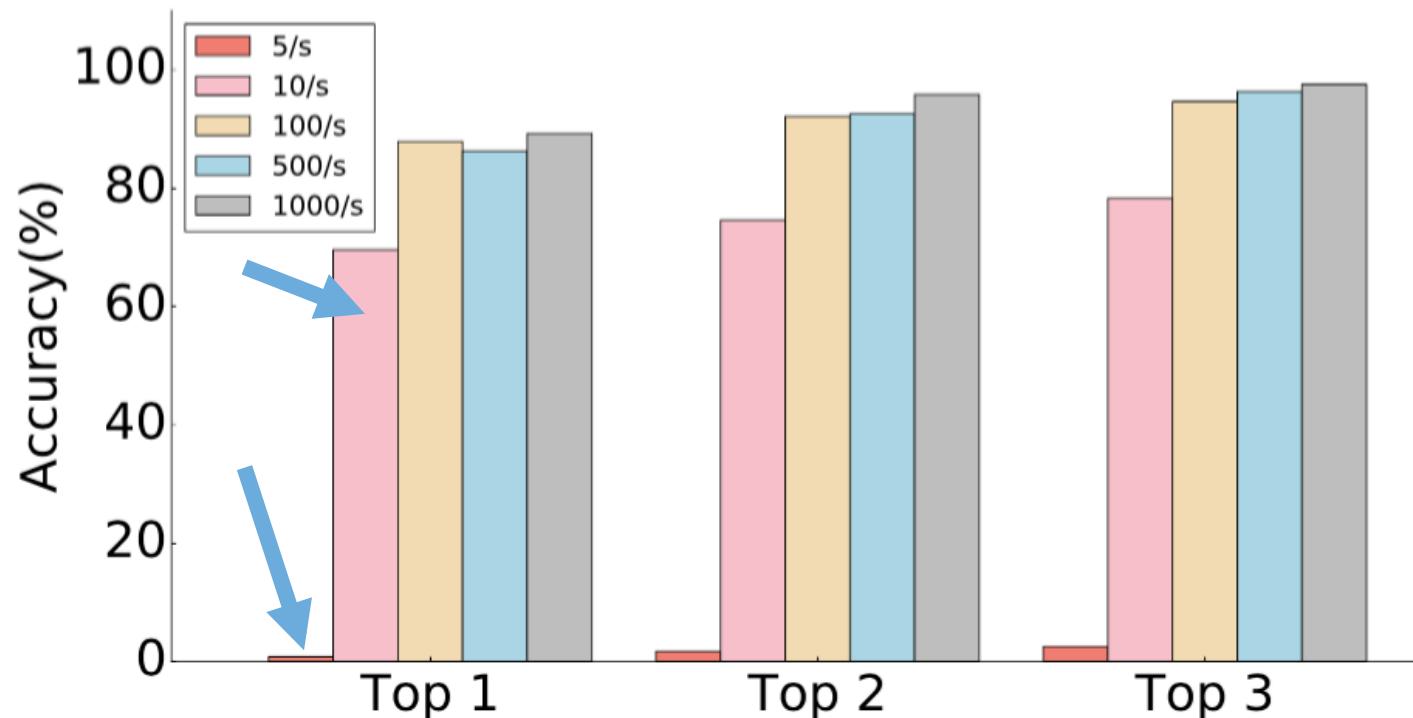


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Countermeasures

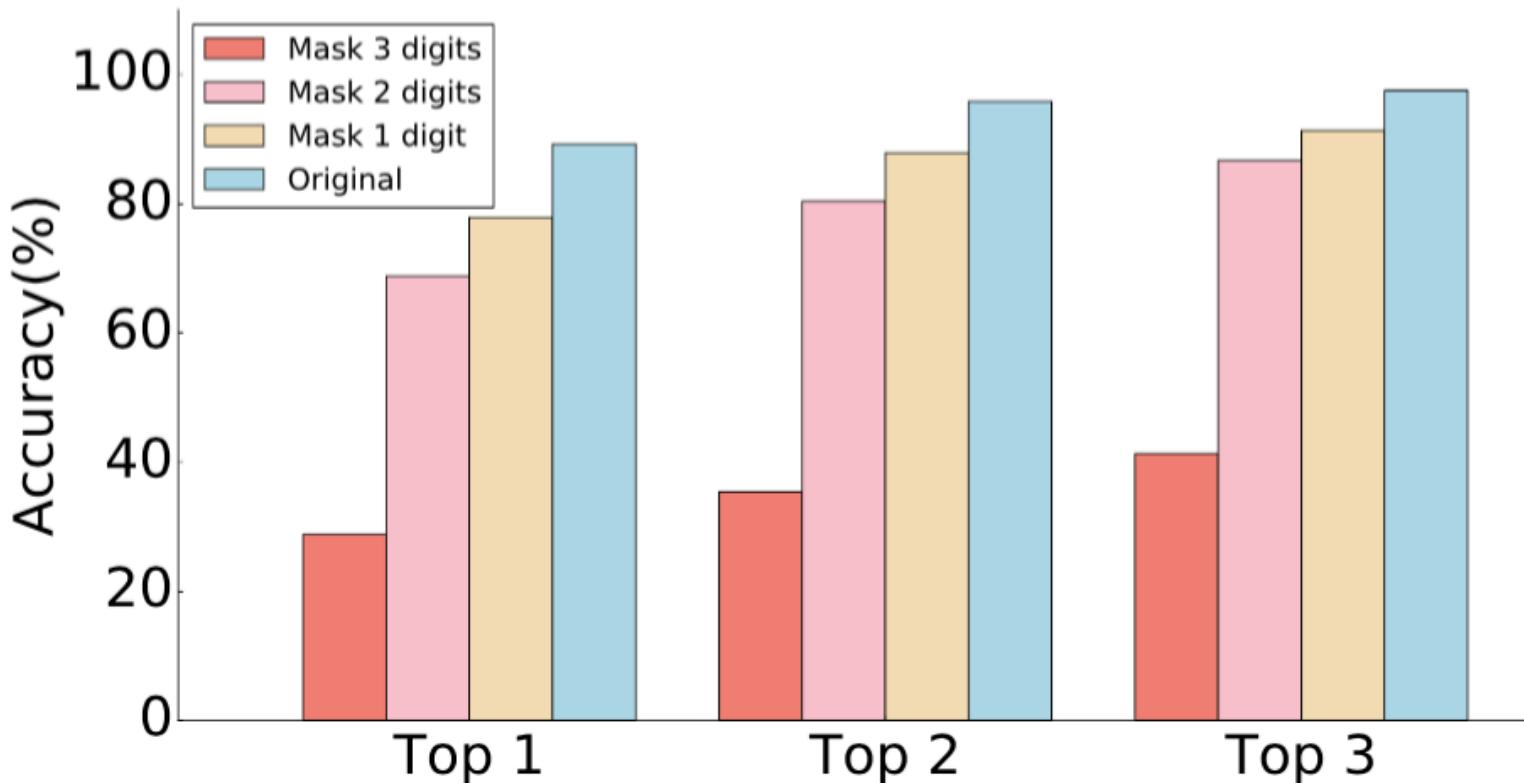
- Rate Limiting: limit the sampling rate
 - Filter the data and only keep every $(1000/N)th$ data point
 - Re-evaluate the foreground app classification



Implemented in iOS 11.1
for `host_statistics64()`: 2/s

Countermeasures

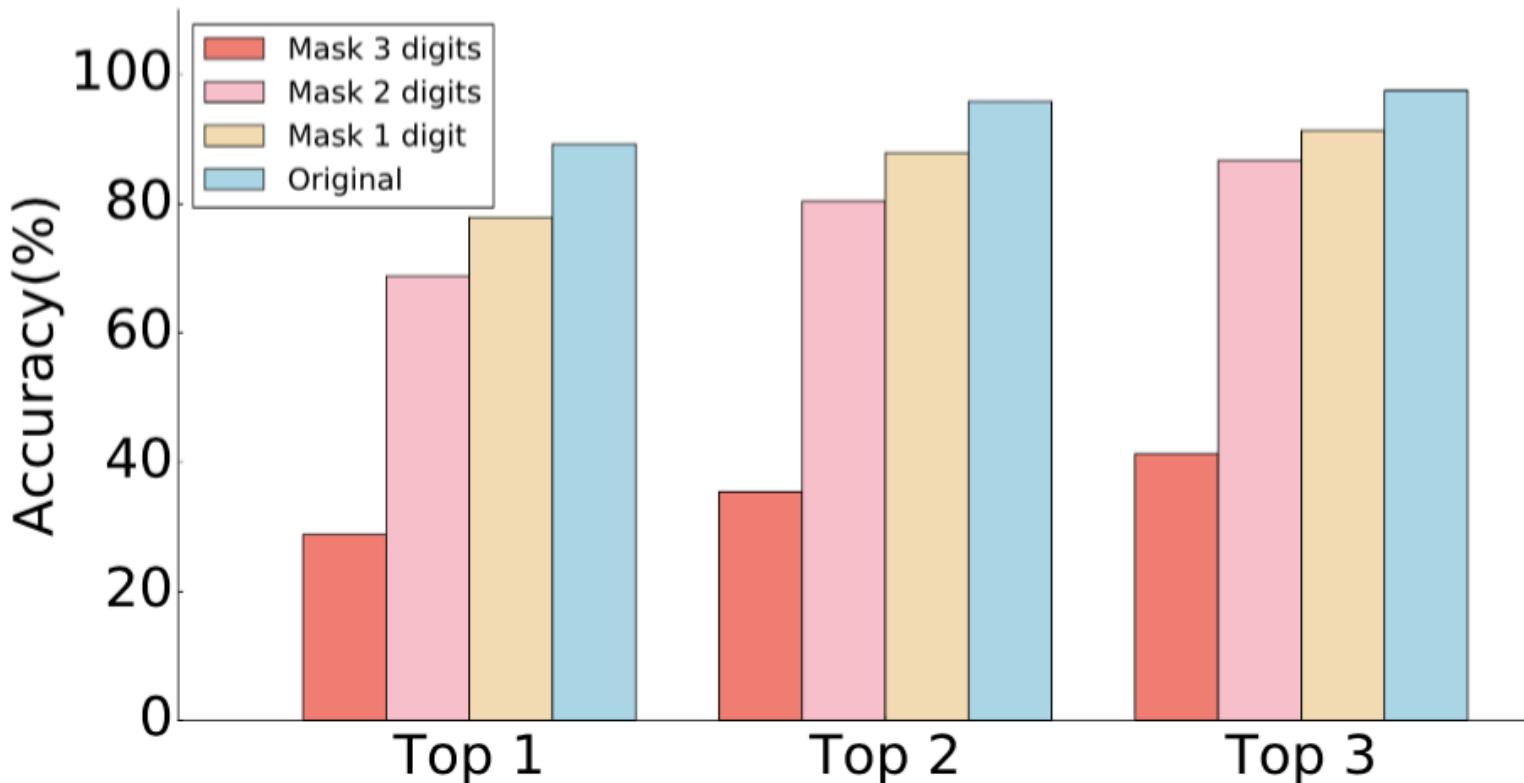
- Coarse-grained return values: masking the digits of return values
 - Mask 1/2/3 digits of all 6 features
 - Re-evaluate the foreground app classification



Original: 1234
Mask 1 digit: 1230
Mask 2 digits:
Mask 3 digits:

Countermeasures

- Coarse-grained return values: masking the digits of return values
 - Mask 1/2/3 digits of all 6 features
 - Re-evaluate the foreground app classification



Implemented in iOS 11
for `getifaddrs()`:
Round to 1KB

Countermeasures

- Eliminating the attack vectors
- Runtime detection
- Privacy-preserving statistics reporting
- Removing the fileExistsAtPath timing channel



fileExistsAtPath timing
channel has been
eliminated in iOS 11

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Conclusion

- First exploration of OS-level side channels on iOS
- Three categories of side-channel attacks
- Proposed countermeasures integrated in iOS and MacOS





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Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities --- Attack Methods

- Time is short (<0.5s)
- Difference is subtle



The screenshot shows a Twitter mobile application interface. At the top, there are status icons: 'No SIM' with signal bars, '5:55 PM', and a battery level at '23%' with a lightning bolt icon. Below the icons, there are three user profile cards: a blue person icon, a Twitter bird icon, and the Ohio State Buckeyes logo (a red block 'O' with 'OHIO STATE' and 'BUCKEYES' text). The main content is a tweet from '@OhioStA...'. The tweet text is: 'Congrats @JT_theQB4th on being named East-West Shrine Pat Tillman Award recipient! #GoBucks'. Below the text is a photograph of a football player in a red uniform with number 15 running with a ball. At the bottom of the tweet card, it says 'East-West Shrine Game Presents Pat Tillman Award to J.T. Barrett' and 'ohiostatebuckeyes.com'. Below the tweet card, there are engagement metrics: 6 replies, 102 retweets, 578 likes, and a message icon. At the very bottom, there are navigation icons for Home, Explore, Notifications (with a '20+' notification), Messages, and Me.

Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities --- Attack Methods

- Pattern Matching: compare two multi-dimensional data traces
 - Sample: $\vec{X}_t = \{\vec{X}_t^1, \vec{X}_t^2, \dots, \vec{X}_t^l\}$, where $\vec{X}_t^i = (X_{t_1}^i, X_{t_2}^i, \dots, X_{t_{n_i}}^i)$
 - Signature: $\vec{S}_t = \{\vec{S}_t^1, \vec{S}_t^2, \dots, \vec{S}_t^l\}$
 - Goal: measure the distance $d(\vec{X}_t, \vec{S}_t)$
 - Extended DTW (DTW_I): (w_k : normalization factor)

$$d(\vec{X}_t, \vec{S}_t) = \sum_{k=1}^l \frac{1}{w_k} \cdot \text{DTW}(\vec{X}_t^k, \vec{S}_t^k)$$

iOS Attacks

JUN 17, 2015 @ 10:51 AM

24,925 

JUL 28, 2016 @ 09:40 AM

Apple App Security Vulnerable To 'D

How Hackers Can Steal Your Photos



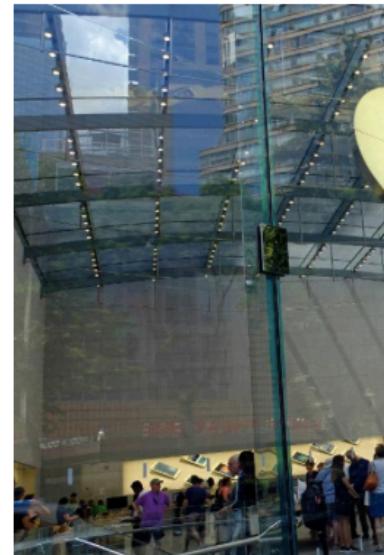
Thomas Fox-Brewster
I cover crime, privacy and security forms. [FULL BIO](#) ▾



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I cover crime, privacy and security forms. [FULL BIO](#) ▾

It's become almost axiomatic that the apps on them are more competitive. But researchers continue to find ways around the security protections in Mac OS X. It's not only possible to create malware in the Mac App Store, but it's also feasible to lay dormant on your device, using rogue software to steal the data around, from iCloud passwords to dodgy selfies and more.

The attacks, known as unauthorized remote access or XARA, expose design flaws that allow hackers to access critical pieces of data in your device. Apple has struggled to fix the issue, which was first [released today](#) from Indiana University Bloomington, Peking University and the Georgia Institute of Technology.



NEW YORK, NY - JULY 27: The Apple

JAN 17, 2018 @ 07:36 PM

19,800 

The Little Black Book of Billionaire Secrets

Dangerous iPhone Bug Hiding in iMessage Is Causing Chaos



Ewan Spence, CONTRIBUTOR
[FULL BIO](#) ▾

Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own.

Apple is facing another blow to its reputation for security on the iPhone. A flaw in iMessage has been discovered that allows a single message to lock up and potentially crash your handset. And you don't even have to read the message for it to activate.

The bug itself is relatively easy to explain. When iMessage receives a message with a URL embedded, it will go online and generate a small thumbnail preview of the link. If the metadata is much larger than normally accepted (on the order of hundreds of thousands of characters), then iMessage will lock up the device. The hacker who announced this bug [demonstrated it to BuzzFeed News](#) through a poisoned page hosted on Github:

Ad closed by Google

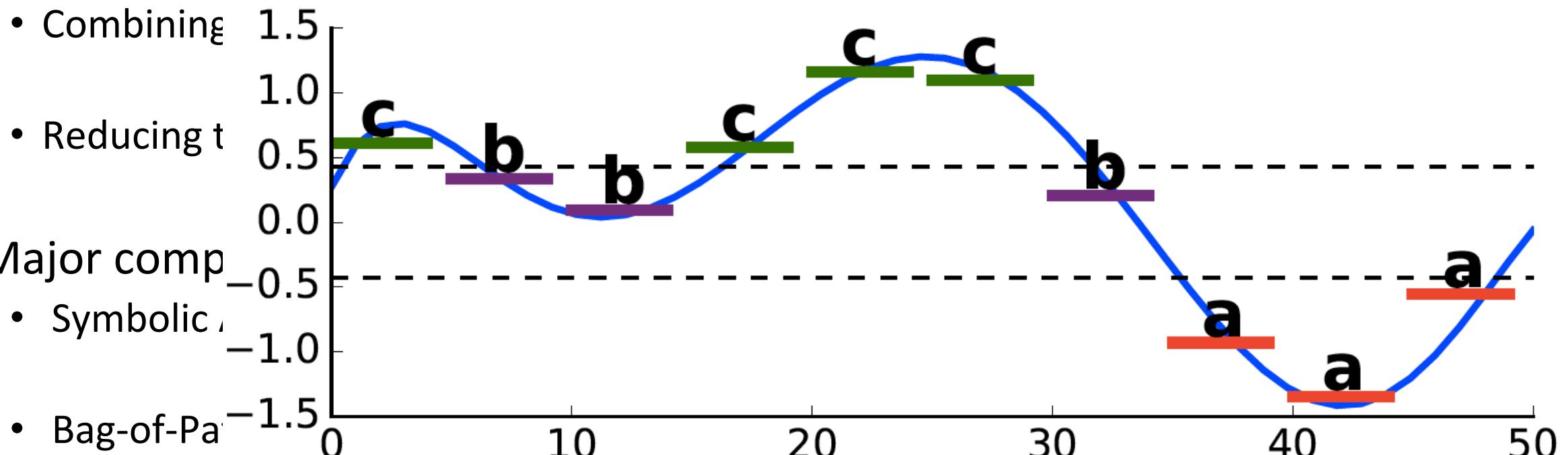
[Report this ad](#)

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Paper	Vector	Impact
Chen et al., Security'14	/proc/pid/ statm	UI inference attacks (stealing login credentials, photos)
Diao et al., Oakland'16	/proc/ interrupts	Interrupt timing analysis (cracking unlock patterns)

Classifying User Activities --- Attack Methods

- Requirements:



- Major comp

- Symbolic
- Bag-of-Pa

- Support Vector Machine (LibSVM) (Chang et al., 2011)

{cbb:1, bbc:1, bcc:1, ccc:1,
ccb:1, cba:1, baa:1, aaa:1}

Classifying User Activities --- Case Studies

- Top N Accuracy Example

Sample	True Class	SVM Prediction (Probability Model)		
A	1	4	2	1
B	2	2	5	4
C	3	3	1	2
D	4	1	4	2
E	5	5	2	4

Classifying User Activities --- Case Studies

- Top N Accuracy Example

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D	4	1	4	2
E	5	5	2	4

Top 1 Accuracy: $3/5 = 60\%$

Classifying User Activities --- Case Studies

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Sample	True Class	SVM Prediction (Probability Model)		
A	1	4	2	1
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Classifying User Activities --- Case Studies

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D	4	1	4	2
E	5	5	2	4

Top 2 Accuracy: $(3+1)/5 = 80\%$

Classifying User Activities --- Case Studies

- Top N Accuracy Example

Sample	True Class	SVM Prediction (Probability Model)		
A	1	4	2	1
B	2	2	5	4
C	3	3	1	2
D	4	1	4	2
E	5	5	2	4

Classifying User Activities --- Case Studies

- Top N Accuracy Example

Sample	True Class	SVM Prediction (Probability Model)		
A	1	4	2	1
B	2	2	5	4
C	3	3	1	2
D	4	1	4	2
E	5	5	2	4

Top 3 Accuracy: $(2+1+2)/5 = 100\%$

Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities

No SIM ⚡ 9:03 PM ↗ 100% 🔋

BTC Wallet



Sent Bitcoin To Bitcoin address -0.010153 -\$19.90

Bought Bitcoin Using MasterCard ****4979 0.010153 \$20.80

APRIL 2017

Sent Bitcoin To Bitcoin address -0.01108 -\$13.83

Received Bitcoin From Bitcoin address 0.011 \$13.27

Sent Bitcoin To Bitcoin address -0.0081068 -\$9.70

Sent Bitcoin To Bitcoin address -0.010407 -\$12.51

Sent Bitcoin To Bitcoin address -0.0014068 -\$1.68

Bought Bitcoin Using MasterCard ****4979 0.02 \$24.96

No SIM ⚡ 5:55 PM ↗ 23% 🔋



Ohio State Buckeyes @OhioStA... · 21h

Congrats @JT_theQB4th on being named East-West Shrine Pat Tillman Award recipient! #GoBucks



East-West Shrine Game Presents Pat Tillman Award to J.T. Barrett
ohiostatebuckeyes.com

6 102 578

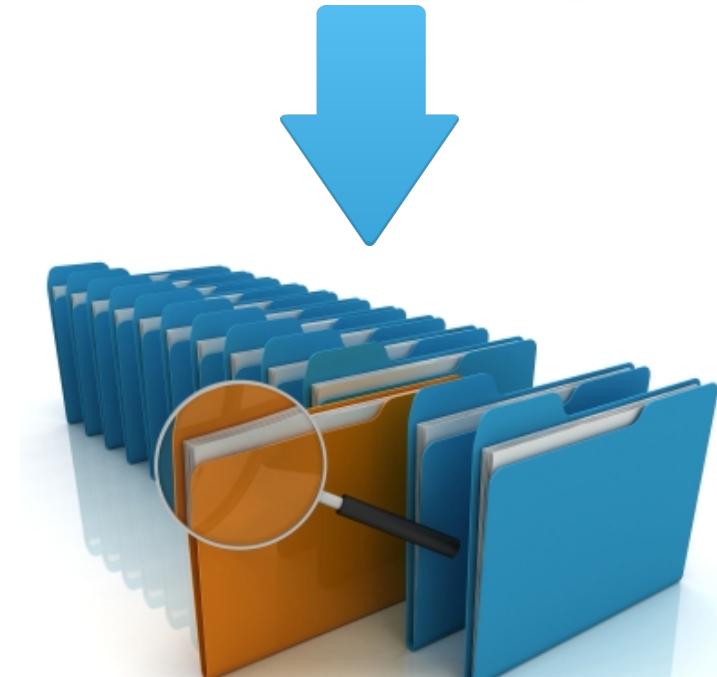
Home Explore Notifications 20+ Messages Me

Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities --- Attack Methods

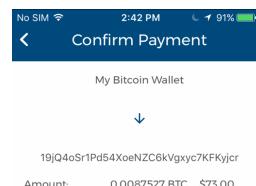
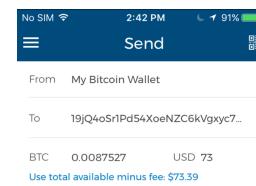
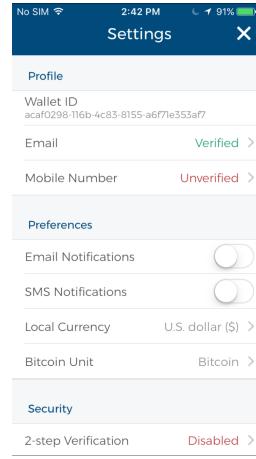
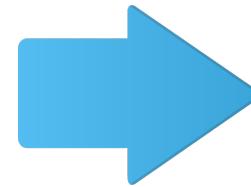
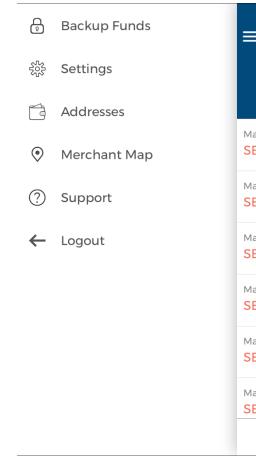
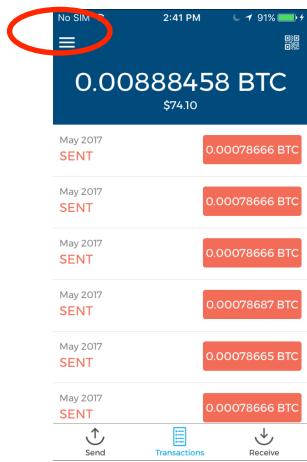
- Identify critical events



- Correlates with public records



Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities



Classifying User Activities --- Case Studies

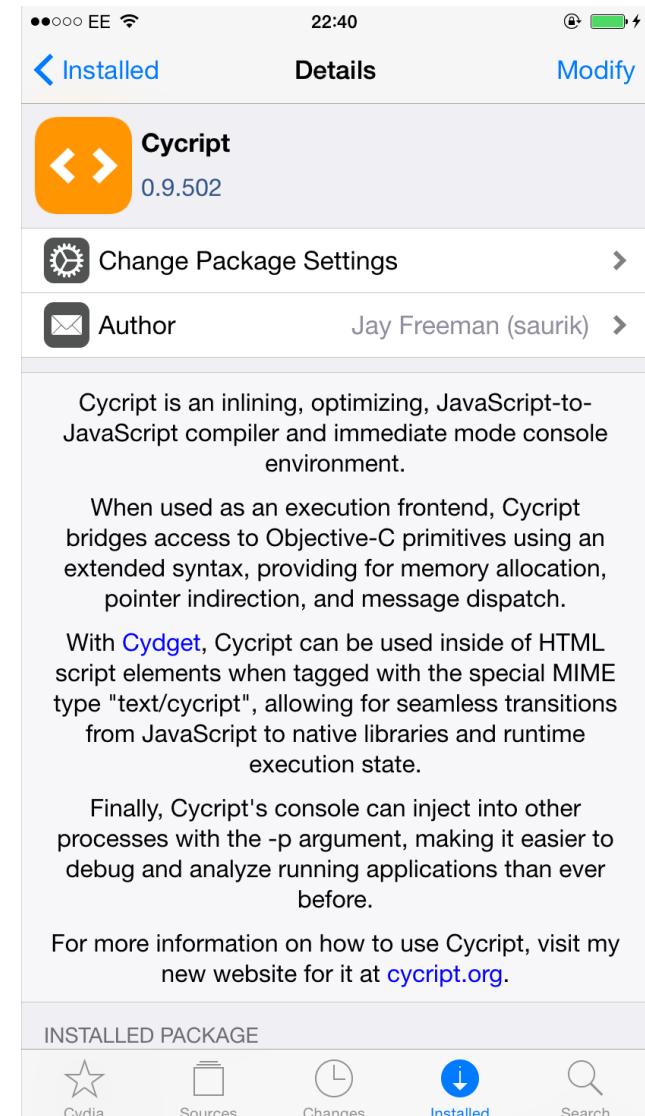
- Device: jailbroken iPhone 7 with iOS 10.1.1
- Automated using Cycript



The screenshot shows the official Cycript website. At the top, the word "cycript" is written in a large, lowercase, sans-serif font. Below it, a paragraph of text describes the tool: "Cycript allows developers to explore and modify running applications on either iOS or Mac OS X using a hybrid of Objective-C++ and JavaScript syntax through an interactive console that features syntax highlighting and tab completion. (It also runs standalone on Android and Linux and provides access to Java, but without injection.)" At the bottom, there is a note about the current version: "current version: 0.9.594". Two blue buttons are at the very bottom: "Download SDK" and "Read Manual".

current version: 0.9.594

Download SDK Read Manual



Why global stat can work?

- iOS itself suspends apps when they run in the background, unless the app specially requests background permissions
- iOS is relatively quieter than Android, which greatly facilitates side-channel attacks

Run Background Apps on iOS

- *AUDIO* background mode
- [NSTimer scheduledTimerWithTimeInterval: target: selector: userInfo: repeats:]

Detecting Sensitive In-App Activities

